

5. What is this material world

The meaning of life is to enjoy. But now you are on a false platform of life, and therefore you are suffering instead of enjoying. Everywhere we see the struggle for existence. Everyone is struggling, but what is their enjoyment in the end? They are simply suffering and dying. Therefore, although life means enjoyment, at the present moment your life is not enjoyment. But if you come to the real, spiritual platform of life, then you'll enjoy.

In the material world everything is made of dead matter; therefore it is simply an imitation. The reality of things exists in the spiritual world. Those who have read the Gita can understand what the spiritual world is like, for there it is described:

*paras tasmāt tu bhavo 'nyo / 'vyakto 'vyaktat sanatunah
yah sa sarvesu bhutesu / nasyatsu na vinasyati*

"Yet there is another nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is." (BG 8.20)

Scientists are attempting to calculate the length and breadth of this material world, but they cannot begin. It will take them thousands of years simply to travel to the nearest star. And what to speak of the spiritual world? Since we cannot know the material world, how can we know what is beyond it? The point is that we must know from authoritative sources.

The most authoritative source is Kṛṣṇa, for He is the reservoir of all knowledge. No one is wiser or more knowledgeable than Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa informs us that beyond this material world is a spiritual sky, which is filled with innumerable planets. That sky is far, far greater than material space, which constitutes only one fourth of the entire creation. Similarly, the living entities within the material world are but a small portion of the living entities throughout the creation. This material world is compared to a prison, and just as prisoners represent only a small percentage of the total population, so the living entities within the material world constitute but a fragmental portion of all living entities.

Those who have revolted against God--who are criminal--are placed in this material world. Sometimes criminals say that they don't care for the government, but nonetheless they are arrested and punished. Similarly, living entities who declare their defiance of God are placed in the material world.

Originally the living entities are all part and parcel of God and are related to Him just as sons are related to their father. Christians also consider God the supreme father. Christians go to church and pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven.", The conception of God as father is also in the Bhagavad-gita (14.4):

*sarva-yonisu kaunteya / murtayah sambha vanti yah
tasam brahma mahad yonir / aham bija-pradah pita*

"It should be understood that all the species of life, O son of Kuntī, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father."

According to Vedic civilization, the perfection of life is to realize one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or God. In the Bhagavad-gita, which is accepted by all authorities in transcendental science as the basis of all Vedic knowledge, we understand that not only human beings but all living entities are parts and parcels of God. The parts are meant for serving the whole, just as the legs, hands, fingers, and ears are meant for serving the total body. We living entities, being parts and parcels of God, are duty-bound to serve Him.

Actually our position is that we are always rendering service to someone, either to our family, country, or society. If we have no one to serve, sometimes we keep a pet cat or dog and render service to it. All these factors prove that we are constitutionally meant to render service, yet in spite of serving to the best of our ability, we are not satisfied. Nor is the person to whom we are rendering that service satisfied. On the material platform, everyone is frustrated. The reason for this is that the service being rendered is not properly directed. For example, if we want to render service to a tree, we must water the root. If we pour water on the leaves, branches, and twigs, there is little benefit. If the Supreme Personality of Godhead is served, all other parts and parcels will be automatically satisfied. Consequently all welfare activities as well as service to society, family, and nation are realized by serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not blind religious fanaticism, nor is it a revolt by some recent upstart; rather, it is an authorized, scientific approach to the matter of our eternal necessity in relation with the Absolute Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Enjoyer. Kṛṣṇa consciousness simply deals with our eternal relationship with Him and the process of discharging our relative duties to Him. Thus, Kṛṣṇa consciousness enables us to achieve the highest perfection of life attainable in the present human form of existence.

When a soul wants to enjoy this material world, forgetting his real home in the spiritual world, he takes this life of hard struggle for existence. This unnatural life of repeated birth, death, disease, and old age can be stopped when his consciousness is dovetailed with the supreme consciousness of God. That is the basic principle of our Kṛṣṇa movement. (Adapted from Science of Self realisation)

Discovery

1. Are we enjoying?
2. Do you feel like a prisoner?

Understanding

1. What is the perfection of life?
2. Is it really possible to do all welfare activities by serving God?

Application

What are the practical ways of dovetailing our consciousness with the Supreme consciousness?

SRI NAMAMRTA

Dealings with the material world for spreading the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement are spiritual, as long as one daily chants sixteen rounds of the mahā-mantra

In our preaching work, we deal with so much property and money and so many books bought and sold, but because these dealings all pertain to the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement, they should never be considered material. That one is absorbed in thoughts of such management does not mean that he is outside of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If one rigidly observes the regulative principle of chanting sixteen rounds of the mahā-mantra every day, his dealings with the material world for the sake of spreading the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement are not different from the spiritual cultivation of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

(SB 5.16.3)

PREACHING IS THE ESSENCE

For preaching Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, any material facility may be employed:

One should not give up anything which can be utilized in the service of the Lord. That is a secret of devotional service. Anything that can be utilized in advancing Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and devotional service should be accepted. For instance, we are using many machines for the advancement of our present Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement, machines like typewriters, dictaphones, tape recorders, microphones and airplanes. Sometimes people ask us, "Why are you utilizing material products if you condemn the advancement of material civilization?" But actually we do not condemn. We simply ask people to do whatever they are doing in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. This is the same principle on which, in the Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna to utilize his fighting abilities in devotional service. Similarly, we are utilizing these machines for Kṛṣṇa's service. With such sentiment for Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, we can accept everything. If the typewriter can be utilized for advancing our Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement, we must accept it. Similarly, the Dictaphone or any other machine must be used. Our vision is that Kṛṣṇa is everything. Kṛṣṇa is the cause and effect, and nothing belongs to us. Kṛṣṇa's things must be used in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

(Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 14)